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Movie setting surroundings to remember

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UTAH can be easily overlooked among the huge range of holiday destinations on offer in a country as vast as the United States.

Mention Salt Lake City to any Brit, and it will conjure up images of Mormons, weak beer and the 2002 Winter Olympics.

In fact, Utah has much more to offer than that, especially for holidaymakers wanting to escape the daily grind and shake off the cobwebs in a spectacular outdoor playground.

The western state is perhaps best known for skiing and winter sports, but remains a quite breathtaking rocky wilderness when there is no snow on the ground.

Its landscape ranges from Alpine-esque mountains to the red rock made famous by the movie *Thelma And Louise* and legendary cowboy actor John Wayne.

Even in the absence of snow, the area is a beautiful place to visit.

In early October we were treated to the blazing reds and yellows of the autumn leaves - a perfect backdrop for pony trekking in the foothills nearby. Fly-fishing is also on offer nearby, while more sedate visitors can sample a unique geological feature.

The Homestead Resort, in Midway, boasts a natural crater filled with warm spring water all year round, encased by a beehive dome of rock.

Further south, the landscape radically changes with Grand Canyon-style scenery.

This is the beginning of film set style surroundings which leave visitors with a huge smile - and stopping every two minutes to take photos.

Dead Horse Point, half a mile from where the dramatic climax of *Thelma And Louise* was filmed, gives a jaw-dropping view, looking out over the Colorado River. Without the water, you could be forgiven for thinking you were on Mars.

The spine-tingling sights continue in Arches National Park, with its monoliths and sheer rock faces. Utah is simply vast, and it is a unique feeling to be surrounded by yawning miles of natural landscape.

● Margaret Davis was a guest of Utah Office of Tourism and she flew to Salt

